

cc 3. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the wood particles comprise deciduous wood.

4. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the wood particles comprise coniferous wood.

5. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the wood particles have been produced from tropical gramineous plants.

6. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the yeast used in the bio-reactor is one of conventional brewing yeast and highly flocculable yeast.

*B*² 7. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the amount of yeast in the bio-reactor is $10^6 - 10^9$ cells/ 1 cm^3 of particles.

8. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the temperature in the bio-reactor is $5 - 25^\circ \text{C}$.

9. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the flow rate of unmaturred beer through the bio-reactor is on the order of 0.05 - 2 times the bio-reactor volume / h.

10. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, further including the step of regenerating the particles after use using hot water or steam.

11. (twice amended) The method as defined in claim 1, further including the step of treating the particles prior to immobilisation of the yeast.

12. (amended) The method as defined in claim 11, wherein the particles are washed.

13. (amended) A continuous beer maturation reactor comprising an upright column-type flow-through reactor containing one or more sieves, intermediate bottoms or flanges, and a carrier material filler with yeast immobilised on it, the carrier material comprising wood particles.

14. (amended) The reactor as defined in claim 13, wherein said particles are chip-like or stick-like particles.

Please add the following claims:

- B²* *circ* 15. The method as defined in claim 1 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 1-100 mm.
16. The method as defined in claim 15 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 1-50 mm.
17. The method as defined in claim 15 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 2-20 mm.
18. The method as defined in claim 8 wherein the temperature in the bio-reactor is 5-20°C.
19. The method as defined in claim 9 wherein the flow rate of unmaturred beer through the bio-reactor is on the order of 0.5-1 times the bio-reactor volume.
20. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein the treating step is further defined as subjecting the particles to one of a water soaking treatment or ethanol extraction treatment prior to immobilization of the yeast.
21. The method as defined in claim 1 further including the steps of removing yeast from the unmaturred beer and heating the beer prior to passing the beer through the bio-reactor.
22. The reactor as defined in claim 13 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 1-100 mm.
23. The reactor as defined in claim 22 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 1-50 mm.
24. The reactor as defined in claim 22 wherein a maximum dimension of the particles is on the order of 2-20 mm.

REMARKS

By the present amendment, pending claims 1-14 have been amended to respond to the matters raised by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §§ 103(a) and 112.